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ABSTRACT

This Tennessee State policy is designed to provide positive learning outcomes for young children and promote parent involvement and the coordination of services for children and families. Introductory material underscores the importance of early learning, summarizes results of preschool intervention programs such as Head Start, and identifies current programs and needs of at-risk children. The next section sets forth principles for the planning, design, and delivery of early childhood education and parent involvement (ECE/PI) programs. Programs emphasize the family and community, comprehensive services, developmentally appropriate programs, quality standards, parent involvement, family services, interagency collaboration, staff selection and development, assessment and screening, early childhood units, planning, evaluation, accountability, and funding. After presenting the State Board of Education policy regarding high quality ECE/PI programs, the report outlines local program requirements in the areas of staff organization and development, facilities and transportation, a developmental learning program, parent involvement, family services, health and nutrition services, services for children with disabilities, governance, and administration. Steps in developing, gaining approval for, and implementing local programs are detailed. Discussion then turns to state responsibilities in the areas of procedures and policies, funding, and technical assistance. Finally, evaluation and accountability procedures are considered. The Master Plan for Tennessee Schools, and relevant legislation, are appended. (AC)

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POLICY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN TENNESSEE

NOVEMBER 15, 1991

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PREFACE

* *Fifty percent or more of the children who reside in economic poverty will have difficulty in school unless some form of intervention is provided.*

* *Parents are the first and the most important teacher in a child's life. The most important institution a young child will experience is the family.*

* *The earlier the intervention for children and their parents, the more positive the developmental gains.*

* *For every dollar invested in a comprehensive early childhood education program for at-risk children, at least six dollars will be returned to society through reduced costs for other support programs and the increased economic contributions of program participants.*

The policy for early childhood education and parent involvement was developed by a task force to respond to a resolution adopted by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1990, and to accomplish the objectives of the Master Plan for Tennessee Schools: Preparing for the 21st Century. The purposes of the policy are:

1. provide positive learning outcomes for young children,
2. promote parental involvement, enabling families to help themselves, and
3. promote coordination of services for children and families.

INTRODUCTION

It's the first day of school. Seventy-two smiling, energetic new kindergarten students assemble for their first day at school. Teachers, principals, and other staff are there to greet them and organize them to go to their classes. The children are asked to gather behind the teacher with her arm raised when they hear their name called. The children's names are each read out loud, instructions are repeated, and then the reading of the names is repeated. Of the seventy-two children, only eight respond by gathering behind one of the teachers. Sixty-four children have experienced their first failure in the public education system. This initial failure will likely continue to haunt these children throughout their school years by leading to other failures.

This is a true story from a Tennessee school serving an economically distressed community. Of these sixty-four children who did not respond, many will eventually be school dropouts, develop delinquent behaviors, and/or be unskilled and unemployed adults. These children are not deaf, these children are not mentally deficient -- these children simply have not been taught their full given names. As with all young children, these children have absorbed all the information made available to them during their early years (0 - 4 years). Unfortunately, for these children that information did not include many basic elements and experiences needed to develop important mental pathways to learning.

The Critical Early Years

Basic indicators of successful early learning which are not evident among at-risk children enrolling in kindergarten have caused many communities to recognize the need to create early childhood education programs that serve preschool age, at-risk children and that involve their parents. Some communities have also recognized the potential value of such programs for all young children and their families. Parents are the first and the most important teacher in a child's life. Therefore, a program to facilitate normal development and to help parents in their role is one of the most effective tools in improving the overall educational success and use of public resources for all children.

Throughout Tennessee -- from its largest cities to its most rural countryside -- most families are faced with the challenges of providing adequate food, clothing, and housing for their children. Because of the struggle required to meet these basic needs, many parents do not fully recognize their roles of primary health care provider, emotional protector, and teacher as critical in giving their child an opportunity to reach his or her potential. The most important institution a young child will experience is the family. The most important person in their life is a parent. The most productive and the most effective program to assist children and families is an early childhood education program that provides parental involvement enabling families to help themselves, and that encourages and supports parents in raising their children.

Numerous studies have defined the significance of developing the important mental pathways to learning during the first years of life. These studies indicate that at birth a baby's brain is at approximately thirty percent of its maximum potential. The brain will continue to develop through early adulthood, however, at no time is brain growth and development greater than during the early years of life.

Children who begin life normally can be influenced negatively by adverse environmental conditions such as economic poverty, harsh child rearing practices, unstable families, or

abuse. Unfavorable child rearing environments are more frequently found when families experience adverse economic conditions, as well as when families neglect basic health and nutrition needs, use a great deal of physical punishment, express low psychological warmth or lack of responsiveness to a child's requests, or exhibit a laissez-faire attitude towards a child's developmental progress. However, a young child has amazing resiliency and can overcome adverse conditions given early intervention and opportunities for development. Likewise, parents can also improve their parenting skills to be more supportive in the development of young children if given helpful information, demonstrated activities and follow-up support. The earlier the intervention for children and their parents, the more positive the developmental gain. This is particularly true with the economically disadvantaged and the disabled populations of children and their families.

The Results

Fifty percent or more of the children who reside in economic poverty will have difficulty in school unless some form of intervention is provided. Many of these children will be considered mentally retarded at school age unless there has been intervention in the early childhood years. Giving information to parents and supporting them in using positive childrearing strategies can effectively remediate negative environmental impacts or developmental delays in a young child, as well as facilitate the maximum positive development for young children with handicaps. Intervention programs at the preschool level such as Head Start have demonstrated that we can:

* reduce the number of at-risk children that are classified as retarded,
* reduce grade retention, school failure, dropout rate, and increase academic achievement,
* reduce social problems such as delinquency, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and welfare dependency,
* reduce the need for special education,
* increase the rate of graduation from high school,
* increase the rate of employment rather than welfare dependency, and
* improve physical health and contain health care system costs.

The family centered focus of Head Start programs and other Tennessee preschool programs such as Nashville's Caldwell Early Education Center that include parent involvement have demonstrated that we can:

* improve parent-child communication and relationships,
* improve parent self esteem and educational/literacy levels,
* increase economic self sufficiency of families, and
* increase parent involvement in schools.

From a purely economic standpoint, the results of well conceived, comprehensive early childhood education programs such as the nationally recognized Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti, Michigan have demonstrated that for every dollar invested in a comprehensive early childhood education program for at-risk children, at least six dollars have been or will be returned to society. Financial gains include, but are not limited to: reduced costs for special education, fewer incidents of delinquent behavior, and increased lifetime earnings of program participants.

Current Programs

The federal funding level for the national Head Start program has provided enrollment opportunities for approximately eighteen percent of those children who are eligible in Tennessee. During the school year 1988-1989, Tennessee Head Start programs enrolled 10,031 children, ages two - five years, of which 8,839 (eighty-eight percent) were three and four year olds.

In addition, eighteen Tennessee local school systems who have recognized the value of effective, early intervention programs in addressing the needs of at-risk children have started or continued preschool programs. These systems have established limited early childhood education programs by using local funds, federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Chapter I funds, and/or federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds to expand the number of preschool age at-risk children served. Five other school systems have developed a collaborative program which is a national demonstration site for serving at-risk children beginning at birth.

However, many at-risk children who would be eligible for early childhood education programs remain unserved in these communities as well as other communities across the state. This state policy will complement as well as support the effort of Head Start and other agencies to serve at-risk children in early childhood and parent involvement programs.

Meeting the Needs of all At-Risk Children

The Master Plan for Tennessee Schools: Preparing for the 21st Century, adopted in November 1990 and updated annually by the State Board of Education, supports the allocation of state funds to provide additional early childhood education and parent involvement programs for four year old at-risk children and their families. The federally funded Head Start program has provided preschool opportunities for some of these children in Tennessee since 1965. Unfortunately, the national Head Start program has never had sufficient funding to enroll all eligible Tennessee children. Currently the federal government is attempting to expand the Head Start program to serve all eligible children. State funding may be required to meet this goal during the next few years.

A multitude of national studies and reports have endorsed the need for effective parent involvement in early childhood education programs. Head Start and local school system programs within Tennessee have demonstrated the potential of success if such preschool programs were available to serve all eligible children and their parents. It is essential that Tennessee establish a policy that will forge partnerships between the community, schools, and parents during the time when their child's development is at its peak. This state policy and guidelines will accomplish this and also encourage a continued partnership between the family, school, and community during the school-age years of the child.

PRINCIPLES OF HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMS

In order to bring about the gains described in the introduction, early childhood education and parent involvement programs in Tennessee should be of high quality and reflect the following principles in planning, design, and delivery:

Family and Community Focus

The focus of an early childhood education and parent involvement program should be to assist families and the community in providing developmentally appropriate support and services for young children at home and in community settings. All program services must be designed to recognize the importance of parents to a child's continuing growth and development.

Comprehensive Services

The needs of the participating families will define the parameters of the core services to be provided. The core services available to all children and families enrolled in an early childhood education and parent involvement program should be comprehensive, and be provided and delivered in a coordinated fashion between various agencies and program units.

Developmentally Appropriate

All aspects of an early childhood education and parent involvement program must be developmentally appropriate in terms of any expectations of children; focused to the age and the needs of the individual child; delivered with an interactive and integrated approach; and address all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, communication, and cognitive.

Quality Standards for Program Performance

All early childhood education and parent involvement programs should exemplify developmentally appropriate practices and adhere to operating standards set by the state which are comparable to those recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the national Head Start program.

Parent Involvement and Family Services

All early childhood education and parent involvement programs should have a major focus on family services that involve the family as a whole. Parents should have opportunities and training for meaningful participation in program decision making which encourage and develop a partnership between the family, schools, and the community.

Interagency Collaboration

All early childhood education and parent involvement programs sponsored through the public schools should complement, not supplant, effective programs currently in operation through other federal, state, or community agencies. All local public school systems and related community agencies are encouraged to develop interagency agreements at the local level which focus on the delivery of essential services needed to all children and families eligible to be enrolled in the early childhood education and parent involvement program.

Staff Selection and Development

The selection and support of well qualified staff is critical to effective implementation of an early childhood education and parent involvement program. Programs should establish staff selection, evaluation, and development standards recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Association of Elementary Principals, and the national Head Start program.

Assessment and Screening

Assessment of young children enrolled in an early childhood education and parent involvement program should involve anecdotal observations and screening instruments designed to support the delivery of an individualized, developmentally appropriate program. Such assessments must not be used for program entry or exit purposes unless required by federal funding sources.

Early Childhood Unit

All early childhood education and parent involvement programs should demonstrate a continuum with programs at the kindergarten and primary grades of the schools. Early childhood units, as recommended by the National Association of State Boards of Education, should be formed within local school systems to ensure the provision of a continuum of services to children and families from birth through age eight and to incorporate the concepts of nongraded, early childhood primary programs.

Planning

All early childhood education and parent involvement programs should have annual operational plans and long range strategic plans which demonstrate measurable goals and objectives, and community coordination of services for children and families.

Evaluation and Accountability

Evaluation of the program and staff performance should be conducted on an annual basis by the local public school system to provide feedback to administrators, program staff, and parents for the purposes of planning and improvement, and to report to the local school board and the state information necessary for program monitoring and policy decisions.

Funding

The state funding for enrollment of four year old, at-risk children in early childhood education and parent involvement programs in Tennessee is proposed to be phased in during the period 1992-1996. The state funding, when made available, must be coordinated with the proposed expansion of federal funding for Head Start programs to ensure that all eligible children and families in Tennessee, as defined by income criteria, are served. Numerous factors, in addition to family income, may place children and families at-risk of educational failure and in need of the early childhood education and parent involvement program. Local communities and school systems are encouraged to expand participation to other children and their families by utilizing additional sources of funding or through fees paid by participating families.

POLICY

In order to establish early childhood education and parent involvement programs of high quality, the State Board of Education adopts the following policy. The policy is effective beginning November 15, 1991, for programs serving pre-kindergarten age children in Tennessee schools:

1. Local school systems are encouraged to establish early childhood education programs which serve pre-kindergarten age children subject to the rules, regulations, policies, and guidelines of the State Board of Education. Such programs may not use any state funds appropriated for grades 1 through 12 or local funds required for participation in the state funds designated for grades 1 through 12.

2. Programs supported by state or federal funds designated to serve pre-kindergarten age children, will first be directed to children who are at-risk due to economic disadvantages. The goal of the Master Plan for Tennessee Schools: Preparing for the 21st Century is to serve all low income eligible, four year old children in pre-kindergarten programs by 1996-97.

3. All programs established by local school systems to serve pre-kindergarten age children and funded by state early childhood education allocations will reflect the principles of high quality programs and use the national Head Start program as a model for organizing and delivering services, with particular emphasis given to family services and parent involvement.

4. State funds made available for early childhood education programs will be made available to local school systems through a proposal approval process. Proposals will be reviewed and funded using criteria developed by the State Department of Education based upon the policies and guidelines of the State Board of Education.

5. Local school systems may operate programs for pre-kindergarten age children through a number of arrangements including direct management, contracted management, subcontracting of program, consortium with other agencies, or combinations of these as approved by the State Department of Education.

6. Local school systems will be accountable under the policies and guidelines established by the State Board of Education for the performance and management of programs established by the local school systems to serve pre-kindergarten age children.

7. Local school systems will cooperate with other community agencies, including Head Start programs, in developing programs for at-risk, pre-kindergarten age children. New programs will complement the federal government's effort to increase funding for Head Start, such that all income eligible children are served in a coordinated fashion within each community.

8. The State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, and local school systems will work with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other appropriate federal government agencies to promote the continued improvement in Head Start program funding, standards, and coordination with schools.

GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL PROGRAMS

In the planning, design, and delivery of local early childhood education and parent involvement programs, local school systems must address the following requirements:

A. Staff Organization and Development

1. The staff positions required for the early childhood education and parent involvement program are: director or supervisor; lead teacher for each group, up to a maximum of twenty children; educational assistants, based on need to maintain adult/child ratios of 1:10; parent involvement and family services counselors at a ratio of 1:60 children; and personnel to provide or give access to transportation services, health and nutrition services, and special services for children with disabilities. Depending upon program size, the responsibilities of some supervisory positions may be accomplished by existing administrative personnel of local school systems and other agencies.

2. The director or the supervisor of the early childhood education and parent involvement program will have, at least, a bachelor's degree with substantial preparation and experience in child development and early childhood education.

3. The lead teacher for the developmental learning program will be appropriately credentialed according to state licensure standards for early childhood education teachers.

   The early childhood education teacher licensure/endorsement was established in 1990. To provide adequate time for sufficient numbers of personnel to obtain this credential, this employment standard will not be applicable until the 1996-97 school year. Prior to 1996-97 lead teachers will hold at least a bachelor's degree and will be actively working toward the early childhood education endorsement.

4. The educational assistant for the developmental learning program will have received a high school diploma or successfully completed the GED (General Education Development Test), and will complete job specific training within a specified time indicated at the time of employment in the program.

5. The parent involvement and family services counselor will have at least a bachelor's degree, with preparation and experience related to early childhood education and working with adults.

6. The individuals coordinating health and nutrition services and services for children with disabilities will have appropriate training and experience.

7. The program staff will complete performance evaluations based on existing state standards. Training will be made available to all staff.

B. Facilities and Transportation

1. The facilities used to provide group experiences for young children must meet the fire, safety, and health standards specified by the state for child care programs. Any other standards regarding fire, safety, and health which are required by the national Head Start program will also be met.

2. The standards required by the state and the national Head Start program for vehicle safety will be met by the program when providing transportation for young children enrolled in the program.

3. The program will provide transportation services to support field trips for the children and parent involvement activities.

C. Developmental Learning Program

1. The developmental learning program will address all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, communication, and cognitive. The program will provide learning experiences in all these developmental areas and be delivered in an integrated fashion which provides daily active learning through exploration and play.

2. The materials and equipment used will be appropriate in size and complexity to the age of the children. All materials and equipment will provide for concrete, real, and relevant experiences and allow for a wide range of developmental interests and abilities and for cultural diversity among the particular children in a group. Appropriate experiences with technology and various aspects of community and family life will be part of the developmental learning program.

3. The daily routine of the developmental learning program will provide for a minimum of 5 1/2 continuous hours of appropriate experiences.

4. The arrangement of the room, equipment, and materials used for the developmental learning program will provide for learning centers which facilitate both small group and individual child use.

5. The organization and delivery of the daily activities and the overall developmental learning program will be based upon teacher anecdotal observations and recordings of each child's special interests and developmental progress.

6. The developmental learning program will emphasize learning through an interactive process. The learning environment will be prepared so that children can learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and appropriate materials.

7. The developmental learning program will provide for a wider range of developmental interest and abilities than the chronological age range of the children in the group.

8. Standardized or formalized testing of young children may only be used for the purposes of diagnosing disabilities, for the development of remedial services which will support mainstreaming of children with disabilities in the regular educational environment, and for federal program eligibility requirements of compensatory programs. The main focus of any such diagnostic assessment will be on prevention and early stimulation of development to reduce the degree of life long disabilities. The State Department of Education will provide a list of appropriate tests, and assessment and screening instruments.

D. Parent Involvement and Family Services

1. The program will incorporate procedures to identify needs and connect families to available services, including education, health, nutrition, social services, and job counseling.

2. The program will provide parents opportunities for education and training for meaningful participation in program decision making.

3. The parent involvement and family services counselors will work with assigned families at the program site and in the families' homes. Strategies will be implemented that enable family members to become active and effective partners in providing meaningful educational experiences for children.

4. The program will provide a wide range of parent and family involvement options that promote the strengthening and best interest of families. In addition to involvement of parents in the delivery of the program, parent involvement activities should include guidance, information, and training in parenting skills, personal development, and child development concepts which foster learning in the home.

5. The family services counselors will serve as the services coordinator and single point of contact with the family. The service coordination of all family needs will be a key element in interagency agreements.

   The purpose of service coordination and of interagency agreements for early childhood education and parent involvement programs is to ensure cooperation and collaboration occurs and that the needs of individual children and families are met.

E. Health/Nutrition Services

1. The program will provide access to available community health and nutrition services including medical, dental, mental health, and daily food supplements.

2. The daily program for the children in a group setting will provide for the serving of breakfast, lunch, and snacks which meet the federal recommended daily requirements for the nutritional needs of young children.

3. The program will provide information and education to all adult family members regarding the health and nutrition needs of children and the services available in the community to assist children and families.

F. Services for Children With Disabilities

1. The program will coordinate services with the state's plan of educational services for all children with disabilities 0-5 years of age.

2. The program will provide space for up to 10% of its enrollment for children with disabilities eligible for services under Public Law 99-457. Any additional staff needed or other services required will be supported through other local, state, and federal funds.

   The state will seek to take advantage of any federal and private funding to be used in combination with state funds to assist local school systems in providing services to children with disabilities and their families.

G. Governance and Administration

1. The program will be approved by the local school board and administered through one local agency for each community, county, or consortium of counties. The local school board will designate the agency to administer the program. The local school system may be the agency designated. All local programs will be coordinated with existing early childhood education programs in each community to utilize administrative structures, community resources, and available facilities, and to encourage diversity of children in each group setting.

2. The administrative agency for the program will have a full-time director or supervisor for the program who is directly responsible to the agency. The program director or supervisor and the administrative agency are ultimately accountable to the local school board for the use of program funds and the provision of required services.

3. A policy council composed of at least 50 percent parents or guardians of children who are enrolled or have been enrolled in the program during the past three years will develop policies, plans and annual operating budgets for submission to the local school board. The policy council will annually evaluate program performance and provide necessary reports to the administrative agency, and the local school board. The program director or supervisor will serve as the executive secretary for the policy council and provide necessary staff support for the policy council. An orientation session and continuing professional development opportunities will be provided by the administrative agency and local school system to the members of the policy council.

4. The local program will organize and support an advisory group for each of the program components and each program site. The advisory groups will include parent members as well as community representatives and professionals related to the component services.

The advisory groups will present recommendations on program policies and operational plans to the policy council and program director or supervisor as requested. Orientation sessions will be provided to each advisory group regarding the overall plan of the program.

DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL PROGRAMS

Each of Tennessee's local communities has its own unique priorities, population demographics, support resources and services, and specialized capabilities of local school systems and community agencies. Each local community will have latitude in developing program plans which meet locally assessed needs, so long as the state policy for early childhood education and parent involvement are met. The following steps will be taken by local communities in the development, approval, and implementation of a high quality, comprehensive early childhood education and parent involvement program. The local school system will submit the program plan to the State Department of Education for approval.

A. Development - Step 1

The development of an early childhood education and parent involvement program involves several critical elements. The local school system will take responsibility for assembling the appropriate local community agencies to discuss the development of the local plan. Within some regions of the state, several local school systems may utilize services from the same community agencies or human resource organizations.

To maximize resources and delivery of the program services, local school systems will meet jointly with other agencies for this development process. The agencies that should be represented in the initial development group include, but are not limited to the following: Head Start programs, community preschool programs, county health departments, county human services departments, county mental health agencies, human resource organizations, higher education institutions with early childhood education teacher preparation programs or other related service units, local housing authorities, and Private Industry Councils.

The responsibilities of the development group are:

1. develop interagency collaboration agreements,

2. conduct a needs assessment process to determine the population of at-risk, four year old children and the needs of their families within the community (all participating community agencies and resource organizations must be prepared to assist with identification and collection of data sources),

3. establish the structure and membership of the policy council, as described in the requirements for governance and administration, to be included in the local plan,

4. conduct an evaluation process to assess the strengths, capabilities, and capacities of all agencies within the community

relative to the results of the needs assessment to determine the best possible administrative agency for the program, and

5. submit to the local school board the recommended administrative agency for approval.

The needs assessment should be structured by the development group to identify at least the following basic information:

1. the number of eligible children and families with projections for the next five years,

2. the number of eligible children and families served by Head Start or other programs,

3. the number of eligible children in need of extended child care,

4. the amount of approvable square footage available to house the developmental learning program

5. the amount of square footage available for parent education and training activities and accessibility to these facilities,

6. the transportation capabilities and capacities,

7. the health screening capabilities,

8. the developmental screening capabilities, and

9. the listing of any existing interagency agreements that could be expanded to serve additional children and their families.

The needs assessment findings should be compiled and made available to the local school board(s) and cooperating community agencies, and attached to the operational plan submitted by the local school board(s) to the State Department of Education for approval.

Upon completion of the development process, the administrative agency for the program will be recommended by the development group to the local school board. If the administrative agency approved by the local school board is an agency other than the local school system, a contract for operation of the program will be established between the agency and the local school system. The administrative agency will be fully responsible to the local school board for providing a program that meets all the state standards and requirements for program operation.

B. Approval - Step 2

The operational plan for an early childhood education and parent involvement program will be submitted by the local school board(s) to the State Department of Education. The plan will address the principles of high

quality programs and guidelines for local programs. A clear statement of the operational philosophy on the family and community focus, developmentally appropriate, and parent involvement and family services aspects of the program which will guide the daily management of the program will be included. All interagency agreements, the needs assessment, and the description of the structure of the policy council will also be included with the application submitted to the State Department of Education.

The State Department of Education will convene an advisory panel to assist in reviewing applications from local communities. Since the state policy will be phased in over several years, those communities with program plans which are not funded immediately will be asked to continue the development process until such time as sufficient state and federal funds are available to serve all eligible children and families in the state.

Local communities who want to broaden services to other children and families using other sources of funds are encouraged to propose program variations in their applications. These program variations might include a wider age range of children served, a larger population of children eligible through multiple funding sources (e.g., fees, ESEA Chapter 1, SSBG, Head Start, or local government), and extended child care available through other funding sources (e.g., Child Care and Development Block Grant, Family Support Act JOBS and Transitional Care program, or fees).

C. Implementation - Step 3

The administrative agency for the early childhood education and parent involvement program will be responsible for program accountability, program renewal and continuity, coordination of services with other community agencies, and ensuring follow through for children and families with the local school system.

Program Accountability

Each program will prepare annual operational plans and long-range strategic plans, and conduct annual evaluations of program and staff performance. In addition, the administrative agency for each local early childhood education and parent involvement program will maintain an accounting system which meets the requirements of the State Comptroller's Office and accounts for all program expenditures, in-kind services, and services provided to each child and family. The State Department of Education will provide model systems and processes for record keeping in these areas. The program will be subject to financial and program audits normally required of the local school system.

Program Renewal and Continuity

Each local school system program will conduct an annual program evaluation and financial audit as part of the normal requirements for local school systems. Each local school system program will also provide to the State Department of Education an annual update of the local operational plan. The annual update will consist of any changes in the assessed needs, program

operation, anticipated services, and additional or revised interagency agreements. The State Department of Education will annually approve each local program and at the end of each five years will conduct an evaluation of the program prior to approval of the program's operational plan for the following year.

Coordination of Services

The administrative agency is responsible for maintaining the coordination of services for the children and families enrolled in the program. The records maintained by the local program should clearly document that the program, through the family services counselors, serves as the single point of contact with the enrolled children and families, and that all of the services required have been provided either directly or through coordination with other agencies.

Follow Through for Children and Families

The administrative agency, when it is not the local school system(s), will have an interagency agreement with the schools which ensures that a continuum of services to children and families is provided in kindergarten and primary grades. The local school system is responsible for seeing that interagency collaboration involving all appropriate agencies occurs for the program and continues in the kindergarten and primary grades. The local school system will work with the administrative agency and the program director or supervisor to ensure that follow through for children and families enrolled in the local early childhood education and parent involvement program occurs.

STATE SUPPORT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibilities of the state are:

1. to establish policies and procedures that promote high standards for comprehensive early childhood education and parent involvement programs,

2. to review policies and procedures to ensure that they do not restrict or inhibit the development of programs,

3. to provide adequate funding levels for the administration and operation of local programs, and

4. to provide technical assistance to local school systems and the selected administrative agencies.

A. Policies and Procedures

The State Board of Education and the State Department of Education will work with other state agencies in coordinating the development of policies, procedures, and plans which support the implementation of comprehensive programs for at-risk children and families.

B. Adequate Funding

The State Department of Education will include in its annual budget recommendations and requests sufficient funds to appropriately finance the operation of local programs. In addition, the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education will meet and collaborate with the State Department of Human Services, the State Department of Health, the national Head Start Bureau, and any other federal or state agency with access to specialized funding sources to investigate enhancement of state dollar allocation by matching funds from other federal programs or private foundations.

C. Technical Assistance

The State Department of Education will make available technical assistance to local school systems and administrative agencies as required in the following areas:

1. development of interagency collaboration and agreements (this will include information on other state interagency efforts),

2. formulation of initial development group meetings in areas with low population densities, extreme topographic conditions and where local school systems need to share common community resources and service agencies, (the State Department of Education will be available to suggest participants for the development group),

3. consultation for and evaluation of needs assessment process in communities with limited access to resources and expertise, (the State

Department of Education will be available to assist with needs assessment methodology and model instrumentation),

4. provision of guidelines for selecting and designating the administrative agency,

5. provision of guidelines for the local program operational plan,

6. identification of professional development opportunities for program staff and training for policy council members, and

7. development of operational plans, evaluations, and staff development activities.

In addition the State Department of Education will be responsible for:

1. development and recommendation of revisions and amendments of any rules and regulations of state agencies that would enhance the receipt of federal or private funds that could be used to expand services or increase the numbers of children and families served,

2. identification of outstanding early childhood education and parent involvement programs for review by other communities in developing successful program components and services.

3. collection and compilation of data and annual measures of program performance and progress.

EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The long range goals of this state plan for early childhood education and parent involvement are tied to the goals of the Master Plan for Tennessee Schools: Preparing for the 21st Century. The Master Plan calls for early childhood education and parent involvement programs which serve all eligible children to be phased in through the school year 1996-1997. The specific goals of the Master Plan against which the early childhood education and parent involvement programs will be measured include:

* all children will begin school ready to learn,
* all children will complete the third grade having developed the capabilities to read, write, and solve mathematical problems effectively,
* at least eighty-five percent of all students will complete high school, and
* at least ninety percent of the adult population will be literate.

For the purposes of accountability, the state will collect data from all local school systems as a measure of progress on the above goals. In addition to student performance on the norm referenced and criterion referenced sections of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), data will be collected on grade retention, special education placements, attendance, school completion, and participation by parents in adult education. These data will be collected annually and maintained for purposes of documenting the total implementation of the state plan over time.

In addition, annual measures of program performance and progress will be compiled by the State Department of Education based on the annual evaluations conducted by each local program. Data collected on local program progress will include: number of children and families enrolled; number of schools with programs; parent/family member involvement rates; indicators of child health/nutrition status; indicators of developmentally appropriate program implementation; and extent of staff development activities. In addition to visits by the State Department of Education for program approval purposes, random visits will be made annually to a selected number of programs to conduct in depth assessments of program operations.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MASTER PLAN FOR TENNESSEE SCHOOLS
(Related Section from 1992 Plan)

I. KEY RESULT AREA: THE 21st CENTURY CLASSROOM

I.B. EDUCATION OF ALL STUDENTS; ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THOSE AT RISK

1. Early Childhood Education

Goal:

All children will begin school ready to learn.

Current Situation: Children come to school from environmental backgrounds that vary widely and that affect their readiness to learn. Some children live in families that are able to offer their children rich experiences in language and learning; others come to school with limited vocabularies and little exposure to the world outside their immediate neighborhoods. By the third grade, approximately one-fifth of the students have not developed the capabilities to read, write, and solve mathematical problems essential for subsequent success in school.

Strategies:

1. Expand the availability of comprehensive early childhood education programs in community and school settings to four year old children who are at risk and to their parents. Coordinate efforts with federally funded Head Start programs and provide state funding to serve children not served by Head Start. Ensure that programs are developmentally appropriate and articulate with the primary grades program.

   Implementation Schedule: Use existing and new federal Head Start funding to serve 7,400 four year olds. Provide state funding to serve 10,800 four year old children not served by Head Start. Phase in the program over three years beginning in FY 94, providing funding for program and start-up costs.

2. Expand the availability of early childhood education programs in community and school settings to children ages 0-3 with disabilities and to their parents.

   Implementation Schedule: Implementation has begun; complete phase-in in FY 94.

3. Provide assistance to local school systems to develop parenting skills programs for parents/guardians of preschool children who are at risk. Assist local school systems to emulate others' successful programs.

   Implementation Schedule: Implementation in FY 93.

4. Promote the use of instructional practices in the primary grades that have been demonstrated to be effective with at risk students including tutoring, cooperative learning, flexible staffing, and periodic assessment so that no child falls behind.

   Implementation Schedule: Provide through professional development package beginning in FY 92.

5. Provide further reductions in class size in elementary schools with high concentrations of children from low socioeconomic environments. Reduce staffing ratios to 15 to 1 in grades kindergarten through three for these schools. (Legislative action required).

   Implementation Schedule: In FY 91 use federal Chapter 1 funds to reduce class size in grades kindergarten through three in schools with 75% or more children eligible for free or reduced price lunches. Use state funds to reduce class size in schools with 60% or more children eligible for free or reduced price lunches. Complete the phase-in of state funds in FY 93.

6. Link the human and fiscal resources of all state agencies involved in children and youth services to minimize environmental and nutritional disadvantages as children advance from birth to age five. Establish a management information system to assist in coordination of services.

   Implementation Schedule: Feasibility study of the management information system has been completed; implementation to be determined.

Indicators of Progress:

1. Number of four-year-old children served by federal programs and by state programs; percentage of four-year-old children who are at risk who are served by comprehensive early childhood programs; percentage of all first grade students who have had one year of pre-kindergarten programs.

2. Number of parents served in comprehensive early childhood programs.

3. Mastery of the Tennessee language and math curriculum in grades two and three as measured by TCAP.

APPENDIX B

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 736

By L. Turner

A RESOLUTION concerning early childhood and parent education.

WHEREAS, research now clearly documents that early childhood educational programs when coupled with parental involvement programs, enable children of impoverished backgrounds to significantly improve and accelerate intellectual and social development and to substantially reduce academic failure and underachievement; and

WHEREAS, early childhood educational programs of quality, such as the Caldwell Early Childhood Center of the Metropolitan-Nashville Public School System, are enabling children of impoverished backgrounds to aspire to and attain new and greater levels of academic achievement and, ultimately, social and economic independence; and

WHEREAS, the Caldwell Early Childhood Center provides an excellent preschool program for three and four year old children and also provides parent training programs aimed at empowering and preparing parents, including teen parents, to take full responsibility for, and to assure, their children's future; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the special benefits conferred directly upon program participants, such early childhood programs and parental involvement programs indirectly confer upon every Tennessean many long term, savings and benefits; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-SIXTY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That this body hereby directs the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education to jointly establish a task force, consisting of state and local educators, state and local human service providers, business leaders, as well as concerned and knowledgeable citizens, for the purpose of developing and proposing a state plan for establishment of a comprehensive system of early childhood and parent education programs for at-risk children and their parents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the task force is directed to submit its findings and recommendations to each member of the General Assembly on or before January 8, 1991.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to deliver copies of this resolution to the State Board of Education and to the Commissioner of Education.

APPENDIX C

RULES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
(Related Section of Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards)

0520-1-3-.05

(5) Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten

(a) Pre-kindergarten programs operated by or through local boards of education (T.C.A. 49-6-101) shall be child-centered, family focused, and developmentally appropriate and shall be based upon the early childhood education and parent involvement policy of the State Board of Education.

1. The program shall provide daily active learning experiences through exploration and play.

2. The program shall provide an arrangement of the room, equipment, and materials in learning centers which facilitate both small group and individual child use.

3. The program shall use equipment and materials appropriate in size and complexity to the age of the children. Hands-on manipulation of real objects shall be emphasized in the learning experiences. Worksheet items shall not be used in the program with the children.

4. The program shall include at least one teacher for each 20 children and additional educational assistants as required to meet the adult/child ratio standards specified by the State Department of Human Services and administered by the State Department of Education for child care programs in schools.

5. The program's assessment of the development of children shall include anecdotal observations and screening instruments which support the delivery of an individualized, developmentally appropriate program. Such assessments shall not be used for entry to or exit from the program unless required by federal funding sources.

6. Standardized or formalized testing of young children may only be used for the purposes of diagnosing disabilities, for the development of services which will support mainstreaming of children with disabilities in the regular educational environment, and for meeting any federal program eligibility requirements of compensatory programs.

7. The program shall use and maintain facilities and transportation services which meet the fire, safety, and health standards specified by the State Department of Human Services and Head Start, and administered by the State Department of Education for child care programs in schools.

(b) Kindergarten programs shall be based upon the state curriculum framework.

1. The program shall be developmentally appropriate with child centered learning experiences provided throughout the day.

2. The equipment and materials used in the program shall be appropriate in size and complexity to the age of the children and arranged in learning centers to facilitate both small group and individual child use. Worksheet items shall not be used in the program with the children.

APPENDIX D

ORGANIZATIONS ENDORSING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

American Academy of Pediatrics

Council of Chief State School Officers

Child Welfare League of America

Children's Defense Fund

Committee for Economic Development

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of State Boards of Education

National Black Child Development Institute

National Committee for Citizens in Education

National Education Association

National Governors Association

National Head Start Association

Southern Regional Education Board

U.S. Conference of Mayors

APPENDIX E

SBE/SDE JOINT TASK FORCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR PRESCHOOL AT-RISK CHILDREN

Task Force Coordinators

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State Department of Education

Ken Nye
State Board of Education

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